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THE  
**Christian Warfare:**  
OR, A  
CRITICAL and PRACTICAL  
**DISCOURSE**  
Of making  
*Our Calling and Election sure.*

WITH AN  
**APPENDIX,**  
Concerning  
The PERSONS proper to be admitted to the  
LORD's-SUPPER.

Πολλὰ γαρ τολλοῖς λέλεκται.  
NEAPA δ' ἐξευρόντα σαρῆ δύμεναι  
βασάνω ἐς ξεγχον, τὰς γε κίνδυ-  
νοι, ὅτον φθονεροῖσιν  
"Απλεται δ' ἐσλῶν δέ,  
χειρόνεας δ' οὐκ ἐρίζει.

Pindar Nem. Od. 8.

Quid ergo? non ibo per priorum vestigia? ego vero utar  
via veteri: sed si propiorem, planioremq; invenero,  
hanc muniam. Qui ante nos ista moverunt, non do-  
mini nostri, sed duces sunt. Patet omnibus veritas,  
nondum est occupata: multum ex illa etiam futuris  
relictum.

Seneca. Ep. 33.

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By JOHN BREKELL, of Liverpool.

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L O N D O N ,

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T H E  
P R E F A C E,

By way of LETTER to the  
A U T H O R.

Dear SIR,

*THE most judicious comentators and critics have, generally, thought that the words, called, elected, or chosen, and the like, were, by the writers of the New Testament, taken from such passages in the Old Testament, as speak of God's calling the Jews from among the nations, or the rest of mankind, to be his people, or choosing them to be a people holy unto the Lord.*

*IN that small tract, which I published upon this subject, I had thus expressed myself, \* ‘ Long before the coming of Christ, the Heathen world revolted from the true God, to the*

\* See the doctrine of predestination reviewed, second edition, p. 84, &c.

A

‘ ser-

‘ service of idols and false gods; and,  
‘ therefore, they were reprobated, or  
‘ rejected.

‘ *BUT* the nation of the Jews was  
‘ chosen and separated from that  
‘ corrupt masse, to be the people of God,  
‘ and to be holy unto the Lord. And,  
‘ therefore, they went under such titles  
‘ and denominations as these, the chil-  
‘ dren, or sons of God, born of God,  
‘ or his first-born, the saints, the holy  
‘ people, a kingdom of priests, a cho-  
‘ sen, or holy seed, the elect, the call-  
‘ ed, the people of God, a peculiar  
‘ people, the Lord’s inheritance, or  
‘ the lot of his inheritance, holy and  
‘ beloved, and the like.

‘ *NOW* the gospel, having the most  
‘ strict connection with the books of the  
‘ Old Testament, where these phrases  
‘ frequently occur; and our Lord and  
‘ his apostles, being native Jews, and  
‘ begining to preach first in Judea,  
‘ or within the borders of the land of  
‘ Israel,—the language, in which they  
‘ preached, would, of course, abound  
‘ with

‘ with the idioms and phrases of the  
‘ Jewish nation. And these being the  
‘ phrases, well known, from their com-  
‘ mon use among the Jews, when the  
‘ Messiah came, ’tis easy to see, why  
‘ such of that nation, as refused to be-  
‘ lieve and obey him, came under the  
‘ denomination of the reprobated, or  
‘ rejected ; for they no longer continu-  
‘ ed to be the people of God, and there-  
‘ fore the former appellations were no  
‘ longer given them. Whereas those  
‘ honorable names and titles were  
‘ continued unto all such Jews as im-  
‘ braced Christianity ; and, upon their  
‘ imbracing the Christian religion,  
‘ their privileges were increased.

‘ NAY, farther ; besides the sub-  
‘ jects of the Messiah’s kingdom, who  
‘ were originally of the Jewish nation,  
‘ ---it was the decree or purpose of  
‘ God, from the begining, instead of  
‘ the unbelieving Jews, to take for his  
‘ people, under the Messiah, all such of  
‘ the Gentiles as would imbrace the  
‘ gospel. And, as the Jewish nation,

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‘ generally, or in a body, rejected the  
‘ Messiah, they, who had, till then, been  
‘ the people of God, were in a body re-  
‘ jected, for refusing him, whom God  
‘ had sent to be their King and deliverer.

‘ THE small remnant of the Jew-  
‘ ish nation, that imbraced the gospel,  
‘ were received into the kingdom of God,  
‘ which he graciously erected under his  
‘ own Son, the Messiah ; and so they  
‘ continued to be his people, along with  
‘ the converted Gentiles, who, all toge-  
‘ ther, made now the church and people  
‘ of God. And, as the Jewish nation,  
‘ before the coming of Christ, so the Jew-  
‘ ish and Gentile Christians, after his  
‘ coming, had the names of the elect,  
‘ or chosen people of God,---and the  
‘ other appellations, which had former-  
‘ ly belonged to the nation of the Jews.  
‘ And, together with such high and ho-  
‘ norable titles, they were likewise, by  
‘ the free grace of God, intitled to all  
‘ the privileges of the [called and] cho-  
‘ sen people of God ; and nothing, but  
‘ their own wickednesse and apostasy,  
‘ could

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• could cut them off from such honors  
• and advantages.

‘ AS God had determined, from the begining, to take the Gentiles to be his people under the Messiah, together with the believing Jews, and not only purposed it, in his own mind, but foretold it also, by many of the antient prophets,---hence arose the expressions, concerning his fore-knowing them, and predestinating, or pretermining, to call, choose, justify, or accept them, and treat them as his children, or people.’ This, then, appeared to me to be the rise and occasion of the scriptural language, upon this subject. And I am still inclined to think that, in several passages, the writers of the New Testament had such a reference. But I can, not only with patience and candor, bear to see others differ from me, but even rejoice to see every laudable attempt to have any mistakes rectified, or any new beauties discovered in the sacred writings;---especially as they contain such a treasure

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sure of knowledge, and greatly promote the study of all the most valuable remains of antiquity.

I know that you, my worthy and judicious friend, have read the antients, with this excellent view, viz. to illustrate the more difficult passages in holy scripture, and have (as you suppose) discovered a beautiful allusion, upon this subject, which has not been commonly attended to. And, I believe, the reader will find that you have pursued the thought very closely, and carried it a greater length than most persons would have imagined.

TO prevent its being contemned, and disregarded, as a thought intirely new, give me leave to mention the words of the learned and judicious Mr. Le-Clerc, [in his note on Matt. xx. 16.] to which you have refer'd, p. 7.  
‘I am ready, says he, to believe, that  
‘this phrase, many are called, but  
‘few are chosen, is a proverbial form  
‘of speech, as Grotius remarks, which  
‘alludes to that more sublime sense,  
‘in

‘in which calling and election are  
‘used in the New Testament, but  
‘which has another different original;  
‘which, if I am not mistaken in my  
‘conjecture, is from the way of muster-  
‘ing and choosing soldiers; when all, that  
‘were fit to carry arms, were ordered to  
‘present themselves, upon such a certain  
‘day, and so were called to some par-  
‘ticular place; where, when many  
‘more had met, than were necessary  
‘to carry on the war, in which they  
‘were going to be ingaged, the most  
‘valiant only were chosen: so that  
‘there were many called, and few  
‘chosen. Thus, when Gideon, Judg.  
‘vii. had called, or summoned together,  
‘many to repulse the Midianites, who  
‘made war with the people of the Jews,  
‘there were but few chosen to perform  
‘that service; see also Josh. viii. 3. and  
‘so likewise Christ, Luke vi. 13. called  
‘unto him his disciples, who were ma-  
‘ny, and out of them he chose twelve,  
‘whom he also named apostles.’

*THO' Mr. Le-Clerc has started  
this thought, he has not, by any means,  
carried it so far, or supported it so well,  
as you have done. However, you will  
(I dare say) chearfully submit all you  
have said, to the most severe examina-  
tion of every candid and judicious  
reader; and leave it to stand or fall,  
as it is, or is not, founded on reason  
and scripture, truth and evidence.*

*THAT knowlege and virtue, truth  
and righteousnesse, liberty and charity,  
may spread daily, more and more; and  
that you, by all your studies and labors,  
may conduce thereto, is the hearty pray-  
er of your*

Affectionate brother,

and

humble Servant,

**GEORGE BENSON.**



## 2 PET. i. 10, 11.

*Wherfore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if you do these things, you shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

F the design of revelation be, as I suppose it is, to relieve the weakness, and to rectify the abuses of human reason; it is highly proper that the divine oracles should be delivered in a plain and popular style, not in a philosophic language:

guage: that so the meanest capacity might be able to comprehend, with ease, the great principles, duties, and motives of religion. But, because the peculiar idioms of speech are subject to vary, almost in every age, as well as in every nation: it is, therefore, impossible, that the same style and diction can suit alike, all times and places. There is nothing, *e. g.* which contributes more to the ornament and popularity of style, than apt similitudes, lively metaphors, and pertinent allusions to known rites and customs<sup>a</sup>. But whatever elegance, or perspicuity, there might be, in such forms and modes of speech, as they were first used and applied; all the beauty and force of the expression will be lost to those persons, who do not observe the true point of comparison, nor attend to those particular things, which gave occasion to that sort of phraseology. Nor is this all; when people have once overlooked the true sentiment, they are liable to affix wrong ideas to words, whereby they commit very great mistakes, in the understanding of antient writers. If the *holy scriptures* themselves be

\* Henee so many rules laid down by the critics, concerning the proper use of these tropes. *Aristot. de Rhetor.* lib. iii. cap. 2. and *de Art. Poetic.* cap. 21, *Longin. de Sublim.* sect. 32. *Tully de Orat.* lib. iii. *Quintil. Institut.* lib. viii. cap. 6,

be not exempt from this inconvenience, we have no cause to wonder at it, much less any reason to object against the *sacred* style, upon this account. It cannot otherways be, without a miracle, but that the language of *scripture*, how plain and popular soever it was, in its original structure and composition, must be attended with some obscurities, to common readers, especially, at this distance of time and place from the grand scene of action. And for any one to make this an objection against the *sacred writings* is contrary to all sense and reason.

THIS being premised, in order to prepare the way for what I have to offer from the words of the *apostle*, which are pitched upon for the subject of the ensuing discourse; I proceed to observe, that their connection with the context is plain and obvious. At the third verse St. Peter reminds *Christians*, of the high privileges they enjoyed, under the gospel; *namely*, that God has given us all things, which pertain to life and godliness, thro' the knowledge of him who hath *called* us to glory and virtue. Under these advantageous circumstances, the *apostle* recommends, in the next place, a suitable conduct, and a behaviour answerable to such gospel benefits. And so, in this view, the words before us are

ushered in, by way of *inference*. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence, &c.

Now, in this passage of scripture, there are two things which demand our attention.

*First*, THE great duty enjoyned, viz. to give diligence to make our calling and election sure, or firm.

*Secondly*, THE argument, or motive, with which it is enforced. *For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. For so an entrance, &c.*

*First*, LET us consider the nature of the duty, and what the apostle may be supposed to intend by, giving diligence to make our calling and election sure, or firm. To this end it will be proper to enquire distinctly into three particulars. 1. What we are to understand by *calling* and *election*. 2. What is meant by *making* our calling and election sure, or firm. 3. What is implied in giving diligence to make our calling and election sure, or firm.

1. LET us enquire, what we are to understand by *calling* and *election*. A just explication of these terms may give some light, both to this, and other passages of scripture, which have a near affinity with it. I shall, therefore, endeavour to clear up the words from that cloud of obscurity, which

which seems to have darkened their sense, and concealed their true meaning, from the generality of readers, not to say writers too. But should I happen to suggest a notion, which may appear to any persons to be wholly new; I hope none will be so rash as to reject it purely upon that account. Let what I have to offer in support of it be considered with candour; and then form an impartial judgment, if an impartial judgment may be formed, where contrary prejudices have been deeply imbibed and long retained.

Now, my notion of the matter is this; the terms *calling* and *election* are figurative expressions, alluding, I suppose, sometimes, to *military* affairs, according to the *antient Roman* discipline. And that there should be some allusions in the New Testament to the *military* customs of the *Romans* will not be thought incredible, by any one, who considers, on the one hand, the extensive design of the *sacred* writings, especially the *general epistles*; and, on the other hand, the large dimensions of the *Roman empire*, in those days, or how far that victorious people had carried their arms and conquests: an account whereof may be seen in *Appian*<sup>b</sup>. Now the custom was among the *antient Romans* and their allies (to say nothing at present

<sup>b</sup> *Prefat. ad Hist. Rom.*

present of what was practised by the Greeks<sup>c.</sup>) When forces were to be raised, I say, it was the custom, to *call* together by a public summons all that were capable of bearing arms, who were obliged thereupon to appear: and, then, the officers appointed for the purpose *chose* out proper persons for the service, and dismissed the rest. So that, upon these occasions, you will observe, there was a *call* given, and an *election* or *choice* made, in consequence of that call.

THIS method of proceeding, in that case, is clearly described by *Polybius*; who tells us that it was practised every year<sup>d.</sup> But there be also frequent references to the same usage in other antient writers. *Dionysius Halicarn.* saith; “ The consuls pro-“ posing a levy *called* all the citizens to “ arms<sup>e.</sup>” *Appian*, speaking of new-raised men, calls them *new-elected*<sup>f.</sup> In the *Latin* authors, the like phrases occur. Thus we read, in *Tacitus*, *elected forces*<sup>g.</sup> And again; *elected*, or chosen, *auxiliaries*<sup>h.</sup>

So

<sup>c</sup> See Doctor, now Archbishop, *Potter's Antiq. of Greece*, book iii. chap. 2.

<sup>d</sup> Vid. *Polyb.* lib. vi. p. 466. 7, 8. edit. *Isaac Casaub.*

<sup>e</sup> Οἱ δὲ ὑπατοὶ στρατούλαν προσέγγεις ἐκάλουν τοὺς πολί-  
γας ἄτακτας ἐπὶ τὰ ὄπλα. *Antiq.* lib. x. p. 492. edit.  
*Rob. Steph.*

<sup>f</sup> Καὶ ὁ στρατὸς ἦν αὐτῶν χωρὶς γε τῶν νεολέπτων τείσα τέλη,  
*Etc.* *De Bell. civil.* lib. 3.

<sup>g</sup> *Exercitus electi.* *Hist.* lib. i.

<sup>h</sup> *Electis auxiliis.* *Hist.* lib. ii.

So likewise, in *Virgil*, youth *chosen* for war<sup>i</sup>, with other passages to the same effect. Hence also that remark of *Seneca*, the philosopher, " Those whom the camp receives " to toil and danger, it *chooseth* with the " utmost nicety<sup>k</sup>." The custom aforesaid having given occasion to these forms of speech, and brought them into common use; no wonder if they came to be sometimes applied to other matters. *Tacitus*, speaking of the accession of one of the *Roman emperors*, observeth; " Things were so ordered that he might rather seem to be " *called*, and *chosen*, by the common- " wealth<sup>l</sup>." And to come now to the sacred writers. That proverbial saying, used by our *Saviour*; *many are called, but few chosen*<sup>m</sup>, had its rise, probably, from the same custom<sup>n</sup>. And hath not St. *Paul* a visible reference to the same thing, in the following words; " Fight the good fight of " faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto " thou art also called?" Again; " No man " that wareth entangleth himself with the affairs

<sup>i</sup> *Bello lecta Juventus, Aeneid.* lib. viii.

<sup>k</sup> *Castra quoque quos ad laborem & periculum recipiunt fastidiose legunt.* Epift. 44.

<sup>l</sup> *Ut vocatus electusque potius a republica videretur.* Annal. lib. i.

<sup>m</sup> *Matt. xx. 16.*

<sup>n</sup> See *Le Clerc's Supplement, in loc.*

<sup>o</sup> *1 Tim. vi. 12.*

" affairs of this life ; that he may please  
 " him, who hath *chosen* him to be a sol-  
 " dier<sup>P.</sup>" But nothing can be more full  
 to our purpose, than that remarkable pas-  
 sage in the book of *Revelation*, where a  
 war is mentioned, as depending between  
 Christ and his enemies. " These shall  
 " make war with the lamb, and the lamb  
 " shall overcome them ; for he is Lord  
 " of lords, and King of kings ; and they  
 " that are with him, that is to say *his sol-*  
 " *diers<sup>q</sup> are called and chosen and faithful<sup>r</sup>*."

Here we have three distinct terms, which  
 manifestly allude to the *military* life and  
 character. For to be *called* and *chosen*,  
 plainly refer to the way and manner of  
 entering into the army ; and to be *faith-*  
*ful*, respects the soldier's conduct afterwards,  
 in keeping his military oath : and this  
 may be the same thing that the apostle  
*Peter* intends, by making our *calling* and  
*election* sure, or firm ; of which more here-  
 after.

HAVING now endeavoured to account  
 for these figurative expressions, *calling* and  
*election* ;

<sup>P</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 4.

<sup>q</sup> In this sense the phrase ὁι μετ' αὐτοῦ is used by  
 St. Matthew, chap. xxvii. ver. 54. and, likewise,  
 by other writers. Αμομφάρελος καὶ οἱ μετ' αὐτοῦ. Herodot.  
 Calliope. Τοῖς μετ' αὐτοῦ πρὸς μαχὴν παρῆγετε. Polyæn.  
 Strateg. lib. i. cap. 38.

<sup>r</sup> Rev. xvii. 14.

*election*; I proceed to consider the proper meaning of these terms, distinctly, as applied to the *Christian* character.

I. OUR *calling* signifies the public divine call, which is given us in, or by, the gospel of *Christ*, to engage in the *spiritual warfare*. But the notion of *warfare* implies a state of hostility. In order, therefore, to form a just idea of this matter, it will be proper to take a general survey of mankind, as creatures under a revolt and apostasy from God.

WHERE this *apostasy* began, I need not say: and by what means, or by whose instrumentality, it was introduced, is no less evident, from the *scripture* account of *man's fall*. Now, from that time to this, there hath been a constant opposition maintained and carried on, between the kingdom of God and the tyranny of the devil: *Satan* obtained a great advantage over mankind, by soliciting and procuring their first *apostasy*; whereby they forfeited the privilege of immortality; incurred the penalty of death; and lost all hopes of happiness in this world, without any prospect of a better. Now, where there is no prospect of happiness, there can be no *sufficient* motives to holiness, to any creatures: consequently, in the state of lapsed nature, the interest of *religion* must have languished

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and died of course, without some expedient, to remove the penalty, due to sin, and to put mankind upon a new trial. But,

It pleased God, in his great compassion to the fallen race, to provide timely relief, in that most antient promise of a redeemer; viz. *That the seed of the woman should bruise the serpents head*<sup>f</sup>, —should defeat his policy, and destroy his power and influence in the world. But the serpent was to *bruise his heel*; importing, that *Christ* was to suffer death, that he might redeem us from it<sup>t</sup>. Accordingly so he did, *For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*<sup>u</sup>. *That thro' death, he might destroy him, who had the power of death, that is, the devil, (who not only introduced death into the world*<sup>w</sup>, but served his own interests by it:) *and deliver them, who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage*<sup>x</sup>. That he might, in a word, recover sinners from

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<sup>f</sup> Gen. iii. 15.

<sup>t</sup> This will appear to be the beautiful sense of that famous prediction, if it be considered, that the heel is the part, where *serpents* usually wound and kill. See Gen. xlix. 12, I think the following passage is a better comment upon it than some *modern glosses*. — *Ἐχις Κτενὲς πατάξας πλέραν ἀγρίω βέλει.* Lycophron. Cassand. p. 60. edit. Potter.

<sup>u</sup> John iii. 8.

<sup>w</sup> See Mr. Pierce in loc.

<sup>x</sup> Heb. ii. 14, 15.

the common apostasy, and reconcile them to the practice of religious virtue, by the *blessed hope* of eternal life, and a glorious immortality in a future state of existence.

AND now, that our Lord Jesus Christ hath abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, thro' the gospel<sup>y</sup>, since he is risen and ascended on high, as the Lord of glory, as the Prince of Life, the Captain-general of Life<sup>z</sup>, and immortality, —if I may use the expression. Behold! the gospel summons is sent abroad, calling upon us to attend, and follow our heavenly leader and commander, to engage in his glorious cause, and to fight manfully under his banner, against sin, the world, and the devil. This is the high calling of God in Christ Jesus<sup>a</sup>, by whom we are called to glory and virtue.

WITH relation to the truth and validity of this *call*; it is attended with all proper evidence of a divine authority. Therefore indispensable is the obligation we lie under to obey the summons; and so, in this respect, the parallel holds good, between the *Roman* discipline, and the *Christian* dispensation. Because the bright evidence, which attends the gospel, proves its truth and au-

C 2                      thority,

y 2 Tim. i. 10.

<sup>2</sup> Ἀρχηγὸν τῆς ζωῆς, *Acts* iii. 15.

Philip. iii. 14.

thority, as a revelation from God, even to a *demonstration*, the demonstration of the *Spirit and of power*<sup>b</sup>. Under this notion, then, all honest, well-disposed minds, all unprejudiced and impartial enquirers after truth, will receive and embrace it; and so comply with the gospel *call*, and obey the divine *summons*. Accordingly, before we dismiss this particular, let it be observed, that our *calling* may often signify the *gospel-call*; not merely as given, but as complied with, and accepted. *You see your calling, brethren*, saith the *apostle*, (describing the quality of the persons, who had actually embraced the gospel *call*) *how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called*<sup>c</sup>, &c. It is well observed, by *Clemens Alexandrinus*, “that whereas “all men were *called*, those that were wil-

“ ling

<sup>b</sup> *I Cor.* ii. 4. that this is the proper meaning of the word Ἀπόδειξις; that it signifies not merely the *manifestation* of a thing, which is more properly expressed by φαίνωσις, *I Cor.* xii. 7. but a *demonstration*, in the way of argument, appears by that remark of *Cicero*; *Argumenti conclusio, quæ est Graece Ἀπόδειξις ita definitur*; “Ratio, quæ, ex rebus perceptis, ad id, “quod non percipiebatur, adducit.” *Academ. Quest. lib. ii.* In this sense, I suppose, the word is used in the following passage; “Οοοις δὲ νεωτέροις ἐνετύχασε καὶ συνηπέροις ποιεῖ καὶ μαθάπειν, τοῖς τοιετοῖς δι’ ἀποδείξεως, καὶ τῶν μαθημάτων ἐνετύχασε. *Iamblich. de Vita Pythag.* cap. xviii.

<sup>c</sup> *I Cor.* i. 26, 27, 28,

" ling to obey, were named *the called*<sup>a</sup>:  
 " for, as he adds, there is no unrighteous-  
 " ness with God <sup>b</sup>:" which remark obviates  
 the cavil of *Celsus*, viz. that, *if all men*  
*were sinners, all should have been called*<sup>c</sup>.

2. LET us now enquire, what we are to understand by *election*. This term hath had such an idea, annexed to it, in *Theology*, by common use and custom, that I question very much, whether any other notion will gain admittance with some people. There seems, indeed, to be a kind of charm in the very sound of the word, which wonderfully enchanteth the imagination, transports the mind, I know not whither, and carries it forth into all the mysterious depths of *predestination*: so that wherever, almost, the word occurs, it is apt to be applied, that way, by persons inured to a particular mode of thinking. But, surely, this must be running into an extreme, at least, and whatever construction may be put upon the word in other places; the passage before us requires a different sense; because the apostle here speaks of making our *calling* and *election* sure. Can the *decrees of God* be made surer by us, than they

<sup>a</sup> Κλῆσις ὀνομασία.

<sup>b</sup> Strom. lib. i.

<sup>c</sup> Vid. Orig. contra Cels. lib. iii. p. 150. edit.  
Spencer.

they are in themselves? Some persons, I confess, by making our *election* sure, understand making it sure to ourselves, as they express it, that is, as they explain it, evidencing our *election* by our *calling*: but, then, by this turn of the words, they give us no account how we must evidence our *calling*, and make *that* sure; whereas the apostle exhorts us to make our *calling* sure, as well as our *election*: and therefore such a construction must be put upon the phrase, as will be alike applicable to both cases. Besides, the word, in the original, doth not properly signify *evidence*; but such a *ratification*, *firmness*, and *stability* of any matter, which causeth it to take effect, and to answer its true end and design. To all which, let me add; the nature of the allusion, couched in the apostle's words, obligeth us to put another sense, than the commonly received one<sup>g</sup>, upon the term *election*; as it is here used and applied. And so what *an old expositor* hath remarked upon that parallel place, *Rev.* xvii. 14. is applicable, I think, to the passage before us: namely, "That *eternal election* is not " here meant, but that which follows upon " *vocation*; whereby we are separated " from

<sup>g</sup> See the Seventeenth article of the church of England.

" from the crowd of sinners, thro' sanctification <sup>h</sup>."

BUT in order to clear up this matter a little farther; let us recollect what hath been said before, concerning the *military* custom, supposed to be referred to. When forces were to be raised; all the men capable of bearing arms were *called* together, by a public summons. Now to *these*, answer all those persons, who hear the gospel *call*; but more especially those that give a proper attention to it, and so are *the called*, as we have already observed. But then, farther; out of the number of them that were summoned, and thereupon made their appearance, proper persons were *selected* and *chosen* for *military* service. In like manner, all that appeared to be duly qualified, and discovered a proper disposition for the service of Christ<sup>i</sup>, by believing and obeying the gospel *call*; were *chosen*, *elected*, or as it were, enlisted into the *spiritual* warfare, according to the method which God had appointed in that case; particularly by the Christian sacrament of *baptism*, to which the *apostle* seems to refer, in the preceding verse <sup>k</sup>.

Therefore

<sup>h</sup> Vid. *Pool's Synopsis*. in loc.

<sup>i</sup> But some were better disposed for it than others  
See Mr. *Locke's* note on *Rom. ii. 6.*

<sup>k</sup> Ver. 7. of this chapter.

Therefore *election*, considered in this view, plainly signifies our *admission into the church militant*, according to the divine order and appointment: or, in other words, our being received of God, as his professed people<sup>1</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> If this shall appear to any an harsh construction; I desire it may be considered how often the professed people of God are styled his *chosen* people, both in the *Jewish* and *Christian* church. To give an instance in each. *Deut.* vii. 6. “The Lord thy God hath “*chosen* thee, to be a special people unto himself.” The *Jewish* nation might be called a *chosen* people, even in a *military* sense, as they were God’s *militia*, [See Mr. Lowman’s answer to the *Moral Philosopher*.] to fight his battles, to assert the cause of truth, and maintain the true religion, against idolaters. Compare ver. 5. of the same chapter, with *Psal.* ix. 4. “Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee: “that it might be displayed because of the truth.” With relation to the *Christian* church, the apostle *Peter*, adopting the language of *Moses*, observes; *I Pet.* ii. 9. “But ye are a *chosen* generation, a royal “priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that “ye should shew forth the praises (or virtues) of him “who hath *called* you out of darkness into his mar-“velous light:” In this fine passage, the *apostle* specifies the great end and design of *Christians* being *called* and *chosen* into the visible church of God; *viz.* that they might shew forth his virtues, τὰς ἀρετὰς, which is also a military term, importing martial exploits. Τάξεις, ἀρετὰς, ὁπλίσεις ἀνδρῶν. *Aristoph.* *Ranæ* act iv. scene 2. “Οπως ἐν ζηλωσι τε τὰς τῶν ἀρχαίων ἀρετὰς καὶ ψυχας, ἀντὰ δέξειται σπληνγήματα. *Polyæn.* *Stratagem.* lib. 5. proæm.—I doubt not but some other passages of *scripture*, which may be thought to point another way, would appear, upon a close examination,

I shall conclude this enquiry concerning our *calling* and *election*, with observing, that some of the primitive Christians appear to have considered these terms, in the same popular and figurative sense. Thus *Tertullian* expresseth himself in his address  
to

to admit the same construction. For a specimen of the rest, let the following texts be considered. 1 *Theff.* i. 4. *Knowing, brethren, beloved, your election of God.* In which passage may be observed, 1. The proper end and design of persons being chosen into the Christian church, viz. *salvation*; in the view of securing which, they should strive to be *making their calling and election sure*. 2. The means, whereby they were *chosen of God*: *through* (rather *in*, or *by*) *sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth*. Because *faith* was the condition appointed of God, upon which persons should be admitted into the Christian church: and the gift of the holy Spirit, conferred upon Christian believers (whereby they were *consecrated* to the service of God;—) was God's express designation and actual choice of them, to be the members of his church, attesting their right to *Christian baptism*. Acts x. 47. This account seems to be confirmed by the reason which the *apostle* gives to prove their *election*, 1 *Theff.* i. 5. 3. The time when they were thus chosen: *from the beginning*; that is, of the *apostle's preaching*, 1 *Theff.* i. 4, 5, 6, &c. 4. The *call*, that was given them to this: the *preaching of the gospel*. It was God's gracious will and pleasure to receive the *Gentiles* into his church, tho' the *Jews* grudged them this privilege. See Mr. *Benson* *in loc.* Again, *Eph.* i. 4. *According as he*, (that is, God the Father, mentioned ver. 3.) *hath chosen us in him*, (meaning Jesus Christ) *before the foundation of the world*, &c. The *apostle* may be understood to speak here, of God's *purpose* and *design* to have a professed church and people,

to the martyrs<sup>m</sup>. “ We were even then  
“ called to the warfare of the living God,  
“ when we answered to the words of the  
“ sacrament<sup>n</sup>. ” Where he speaks of  
*Christian baptism*, in the common style and  
language of those times, expressing it  
by a word, which alludes to the *military oath*.

among the *Gentiles*. See Mr. *Locke* *in loc.* And, since the choice, here spoken of, plainly refers to the *gospel period*; their being said to be *chosen*, *before the foundation of the world*, can only be meant, by a known *Hebraism*, of God’s *certain purpose* and design, with relation to the said choice, which was actually to take place under the *gospel dispensation*, in the *calling* of the *Gentiles*. Hence they are said, ver. 11. to be  
“ predestinated, according to the *purpose* of him, who  
“ worketh all things, after the counsel of his own  
“ will;” executing his former designs, in his present dispensations. Upon other occasions, the same *apostle* of the *Gentiles* speaks both of *calling* and *election*, as the matter of a divine *purpose*. The *calling* of the *Gentiles* was according to God’s eternal *purpose*, *Eph.* iii. 11. compared with the foregoing verses. See also *2 Tim.* i. 9, 10, 11. *Rom.* viii. 28. Again: St. *Paul* speaks of the *purpose* of God, according (or with respect) to *election*, *Rom.* ix. 11. And what *election* there signifies,—that it relates to the professed people of God, and the visible members of his church here upon earth, will appear, by comparing that context with *Malachi* i. 2. See Mr. *Locke* and Dr. *Whitby* upon that chapter.

<sup>m</sup> *Vocati sumus ad militiam Dei vivi jam tunc, cum in sacramenti verba respondimus.*

<sup>n</sup> This, by the way, will, perhaps, explain what our *apostle* means, by the answer of a good conscience, with relation to *baptism*, *1 Pet.* iii. 21.

*oath*. Again, the same author hath these expressions; *called by water, chosen by blood*<sup>p</sup>. It must be confessed the *Valentinians* had early a more refined and philosophical notion of *election*, as we learn from *Irenæus*<sup>q</sup>. But this venerable writer represents them as a most infamous sect of *heretics*; whose principles were as weak in

D 2                    their

<sup>o</sup> The word *sacramentum* is a contraction of *sacrum juramentum*; and so it is rendered *Ἵερον ὅρκον*, by *Dionys. Halicarn. Antiq.* lib. viii. The propriety of this term, as applied to *baptism* and the *Lord's-supper*, is excepted to, by several writers. *Curcellæus* in particular, having taken notice, that the word, *sacrament*, originally signified an *oath*, especially the *military oath*, &c. proceeds to ask; what relation hath *baptism* and the *Lord's-supper* to these things? *Op. Theolog.* p. 826. But some relation between them may be discerned, with a view to the notion of a *spiritual warfare*, which manifestly gave occasion to this use of the term. The correspondence between *baptism* and the *military oath* may be hinted at, by St. *Paul*, when he speaks of being *baptised for the dead*: *1 Cor. xv. 29.* by way of allusion, perhaps, to the custom of filling up the vacancies in the army, with fresh recruits. See the very learned Sir *Richard Ellis*'s fine remark upon the place, *Fortuita Sacra*. p. 137, &c. Farther; the words of *Tertullian*, viz. *answering to the words of the sacrament*, may lead us into the meaning of the *apostle, Peter*, when he speaks of the *answer of a good conscience*, with reference to *baptism*, *1 Pet. iii. 21.*

<sup>p</sup> *Lib. de Baptismo.*

<sup>q</sup> Εαὐλές δὲ ὑπερψήστ, τελέτης ἀποκαλύψης καὶ σπέρματα Ἐκλογῆς. *Advers. Heres.* lib. i. p. 31. edit. *Grabe.*

their foundation, as wicked in their tendency'.

AND so much for the first thing, viz. what we are to understand by our *calling* and *election*.

2. OUR next enquiry is this; "what is meant by making our calling and election *sure*?" This matter hath been touched upon before; but I would now farther observe, that to make our *calling* and *election* sure, is to ratify and confirm them, by a conduct suitable to their high and holy design; without which they would be null and void, in vain and of no significance, or effect, with relation to the valuable ends and purposes of religion and happiness. But, to give some farther illustration to this matter, let the following particulars be considered.

1. IN order to make our *calling* and *election* *sure*, that is, to *ratify* and *confirm* them;

<sup>†</sup> Whether this sort of men gave occasion to that reflection of Cæcilius, *Sic sectæ vestræ non spontaneos cupere, sed electos. Minut. Felix. p. 84. edit. Davis:* or, whether it be a mere calumny, like many other of his censures, it is certain the notion, he chargeth upon the primitive *Christians*, contradic<sup>t</sup>s a common maxim, viz. that *Christ* will have none but *volunteers*, in his service. There seems, indeed, to have been a distinction in the Roman discipline, between *volunteers* and *chosen* men. Vid. *Plin. Epist. lib. x. 39.* But to urge a parallel here, would, I suppose, be driving the metaphor too far.

them; it is necessary that we live up to our Christian engagements, and thereby acquit ourselves well in the *spiritual* warfare. The good *soldiers* of *Jesus Christ* are *called*, and *chosen*, and *faithful*<sup>1</sup>: they are *faithful* to their *military* engagements. Now the *military oath* did run in this form: “we will observe orders, and do, “to the utmost of our power, whatsoever “is commanded us by our chiefs<sup>2</sup>.” In like manner the professed followers of Christ lay themselves under a solemn obligation to observe all things whatsoever he hath commanded<sup>3</sup>. By the said oath, the *Roman* soldiers obliged themselves to follow their commanders whithersoever they lead them<sup>4</sup>. Accordingly, it is said of the true followers of Christ: *these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*<sup>5</sup>. Whatsoever expedition, or duty, we are lead out upon, we must follow the *Captain of our salvation*, with resolution and vigour, undaunted with the prospect of difficulties and dangers. This is to *walk worthy of the vocation where-*

<sup>1</sup> Rev. xvii. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Ήμᾶς πειθαρχήσειν ω̄ ποίσειν τὸ προσατζομένον ὑπὸ τῶν Ἀρχόντων κατὰ δυνάμιν. Polyb. lib. 6.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. xxviii. 20.

<sup>4</sup> “Οτε γὰρ ὅρκῷ ὁ στρατιώτης—ἀκολυθῶν κελένει τοὺς στρατευομένους ὅποι ποτ’ ἂν ἀγωσί. Dionys. Halicarn. Antiq. lib. xi.

<sup>5</sup> Rev. xiv. 4.

*wherewith we are called<sup>y</sup> :—worthy of God,  
who has called us to his kingdom and glory<sup>z</sup>.—  
And thus, by a worthy deportment, be-  
coming the dignity of our character and  
profession, hopes and prospects, we shall  
*confirm our calling and election*, secure the  
favour and approbation of our heavenly  
prince and commander, and so prevent a  
shameful, dishonourable *discharge*. Concerning  
him that *overcomes*, our Lord Christ  
hath declared, *I will not blot his name  
out of the book of life<sup>a</sup>*; an expression,  
which may allude to the muster-roll in an  
*army*, from whence the names of the *dead*  
were struck off, as well as theirs, who were  
cashedier<sup>b</sup>.*

2. “ **T H A T** we may *confirm our calling*  
“ *and election*, or make them *sure*; we  
“ must persevere in the service of Christ  
“ to the end.” It is highly probable, con-  
sidering the state of *Christians* in those days,  
that this is one thing which the *apostle* had  
principally in view; and that he intended  
to warn *Christians*, and thereby arm them,  
against the danger, sin, and scandal of *apo-  
stasy*, of deserting the cause of Christ, and  
meditating

<sup>y</sup> *Eph.* iv. 1.

<sup>z</sup> *1 Thess.* ii. 12.

<sup>a</sup> *Rev.* iii. 5.

<sup>b</sup> *Miles pulchre centuriatus est expuncto in manipulo,*  
*Plaut. Curcul. act iv. sc. iv.* Vid. *Not. Varior.* in loc.  
edit. Gronov.

meditating a revolt, like so many *traitors* and *renegado's*. The apostle to the *Hebrews* hath expressed this matter, " by holding fast the confidence, and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end ". The same thing is also intended, by being *faithful unto death*<sup>d</sup>. To this purpose, *Clemens Alexandrinus* observes ; " Those persons, that do not rashly expose themselves to death, but do it, at God's call, with alacrity and manly fortitude, confirm their calling, or make it sure<sup>e</sup> :"—language, which manifestly refers to the words of St. Peter, under consideration. So that, according to that learned writer, a *Christian* may be said to make his *calling*, and, by consequence, his *election*, *sure*, when he stedfastly perseveres in the service of *Christ*, and is even ready, when called to it, to hazard his life, in the cause of *truth* and *virtue*, rather than desert it. This fine character another *antient Christian* writer hath expressed, by " the uncorrupted firmness of those that stand ". But the noble spirit and resolution, which becomes a *Christian*, in this case, I cannot describe better,

<sup>c</sup> *Heb.* iii. 6.

<sup>d</sup> *Rev.* ii. 10.

<sup>e</sup> Τὴν κληρον—βεβαιῶσιν. *Strom.* lib. 7.

<sup>f</sup> *Incorrumptam stantium firmitatem.* *Cyprian.* de *Lapis.*

better, than by proposing the example of *Socrates*, expressing himself in these terms, a little before his death : “ I should be “ guilty of a most horrid crime, O ye “ *Athenians*, if I obeyed the commanders “ whom you *chose*; and where they ap- “ pointed me a station, in *Potidæa* and in “ *Amphipolis*, and in *Delios*, maintained my “ post, as well as others, and hazarded “ my life: and yet, when *God* had sta- “ tioned me<sup>g</sup>, as I verily believed, that I “ should devote my life to *philosophy*, and “ make it my business to sift and try my- “ self and others, should I, thro’ fear of “ death, or any thing else, *desert my rank*; “ this had been a grievous crime, indeed, “ for which you might have justly brought “ an accusation against me as an *Atheist*; “ or accused me of *Atheism<sup>h</sup>*. ” Such language as this breathes a spirit worthy of a brave *Christian hero*.

3. THE solemn renewing of our sacramental vows, or resolutions, as Christians, upon proper occasions, may be considered as an useful mean of *making our calling and election sure*. By repeating the *military oath*, at certain times, the army gave fresh assurances of their fidelity to their prince

<sup>g</sup> οὐδὲ τάπεινος.

<sup>h</sup> *Plato's Apolog.*

prince and commander<sup>i</sup>. Now, besides *baptism*, the rite of initiation, or admission; our *Lord Jesus Christ* has instituted another positive ordinance in his church, for a symbol of Christian communion, *viz.*, the *Lord's-supper*, which is commonly called a *rite of confirmation*, or continuance in visible church-membership. As this ordinance is a religious memorial of the death of Christ, *who is the propitiation for our sins<sup>k</sup>*; it may, therefore, be called *a feast upon a sacrifice<sup>l</sup>*. And since it was an antient custom, to enter into covenants, and confirm them, by *feasting together upon a sacrifice<sup>m</sup>*, perhaps the *Lord's-supper* may be considered as a sort of *federal rite*; whereby we renew our *resolutions*, or *recognize our obligations<sup>n</sup>*, to be the Lord's. With a view to this ordinance, we may understand the account which *Pliny* gave to the emperor *Trajan*, of the primitive *Christians*, as he received it from some who had been of their communion; to the following effect. “ It was their custom to “ meet together on a certain day, early “ in the morning, before it was light; and

<sup>i</sup> Vid. *Tacit. Annal.* lib. i. *Plin. Epist.* lib. x. 60.

<sup>k</sup> *I John* ii. 2.

<sup>l</sup> See the learned *Cudworth's true Notion of the Lord's-Supper.*

<sup>m</sup> *Psal.* 1. 5.

<sup>n</sup> See *Plain Account, &c.*

" to sing an hymn to *Christ* as to a God<sup>o</sup>,  
 " and to bind themselves, by a *sacra-*  
 " *ment*, not to do any ill thing; but (*on*  
 " *the contrary*) that they should abstain  
 " from theft, and robbery, and adultery,  
 " and from betraying their trust, or deny-  
 " ing the pledge<sup>p</sup>." The circumstance of  
 time, here specified, in celebrating the  
*Lord's-supper*, agrees with *Tertullian's* ac-  
 count of the matter: for this author faith  
 expressly; we receive the *sacrament* of the  
*Eucharist*, in our meetings before day<sup>q</sup>.  
 Therefore, considering the *Lord's-supper*  
 under this notion, a due serious attendance  
 upon it, from time to time, may be deemed  
 an useful *mean* of *making our calling and*  
*election sure*, by impressing and *reinforc-*  
*ing, upon our own consciences, the sacred*  
*ties and obligations of religion*<sup>r</sup>.

3. THE third and last thing remains to  
 be considered: namely, what is implied  
 in *giving diligence* to make our calling  
 and election sure. " Wherefore, the ra-  
 ther

<sup>o</sup> It was, no doubt, on the *Lord's-day*, that they met together; and so the *hymn* they sung to *Christ* was, probably, an *hymn* upon his *resurrection*. It was customary among the *Heathens* to sing *hymns* to their *Gods*, or in praise of them; Θεούς τε ὑμνοῦσα παῖδες. *Dionys. Halicarn. Antiq.* lib. 2.

<sup>p</sup> *Plin. Epist.* lib. x. 27.

<sup>q</sup> *Antelucanis cætibus. De coronâ militis.*

<sup>r</sup> See the *Appendix*.

"ther, brethren, give diligence, &c<sup>f</sup>." Now, to give diligence, in this affair, is to make it our principal care and business; and to pursue the matter with proportionable zeal and vigour, according to the nature and importance of the great undertaking.

i. *TO give diligence* to make our calling and election sure, is to make this affair our principal care and business. Abstracting our minds, as much as may be, from other matters, we must be, not solely, but chiefly intent upon the superior concerns of religion. The affairs of this lower world, must, by no means, be neglected: but, with such things we should not unnecessarily incumber ourselves; all must be managed in a consistency with, and by way of subordination and subserviency unto, our spiritual and eternal interest. *Seek first the kingdom of God, &c<sup>t</sup>.* In this view St. Paul faith to Timothy, *Thou, therefore, endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, that he may please him, who hath chosen him to be a soldier<sup>u</sup>.* Which words may receive some illustration from what the same apostle hath said,

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upon

<sup>f</sup> Σπουδάσατε.<sup>t</sup> Matt. vi. 33.<sup>u</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4.

upon another occasion ; *He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord*<sup>w</sup>. Because, among other worldly matters which the *Roman soldiers* were not permitted to be concerned in, they were not allowed to marry<sup>x</sup>. To this military custom some reference may be had in the following passage : *These are they which were not defiled with women ; for they are virgins ; these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goes*<sup>y</sup>. Undistracted with family affairs, or any worldly and secular matters, the true followers of Christ firmly adhere to his service, which they prefer to their own ease and convenience. But do not mistake me, as if I were urging *celibacy* upon any one. What I design by these remarks, is only to illustrate the *Scripture* ; and take occasion from thence to recommend to *Christians* in general, and and to Christ's *ministers* in particular, a superior

<sup>w</sup> *I Cor.* vii. 32.

<sup>x</sup> This matter is overlooked by Dr. *Hammond*, and other *Expositors*, upon the place ; but, I imagine, it is one thing which St. *Paul* had in his eye, and that he designed to give *Timothy* an hint upon that head, which he bids him to consider on, ver. 7. For the fact itself, consult *Dion. Cass.* lib. 60. *Tertullian Exhort. ad Castitat.* *Herodian.* lib. 3. which last named author saith, that the custom aforesaid was altered by the *emperour Severus*.

<sup>y</sup> *Revel.* xiv. 4.

perior concern for the interests of *religion*, as *the one thing needful*; in comparison whereof all other things ought to be treated as matters of indifference, because *the fashion of this world passeth away*<sup>z</sup>.

2. *To give diligence* to make our calling and election sure, is to pursue the affair with proportionable zeal and vigour, according to the nature and importance of the great undertaking: it is an affair which requires and deserves our best attention and application. We must, therefore, be seriously intent upon the matter, and apply ourselves to it with the greatest industry, as the language of the apostle seems to import<sup>a</sup>. The diligence required in this case, may respect both application and contrivance.

There must be thought and contrivance in the affair. Particularly, we should take care to get ourselves furnished with the Christian armour, and to have it always in readiness for use. *Let us cast off the works of darkness*, saith the apostle, *and put on the armour of light*<sup>b</sup>. Alluding, probably,

<sup>z</sup> *I Cor. vii. 29—31.*

<sup>a</sup> The same word is used by *Ctesias*, when he represents the *Asiatic* princes, as wholly bent upon their pleasures, and exceeding studious in gratifying their appetites; *τεπὶ τρυφὴν σπουδάσαι*. *Vid. Athenæ. Deipnos.* lib. 12.

<sup>b</sup> *Rom. xiii. 12.*

bably, to the custom of *soldiers pulling off their cloaths, when they were going to put on a sett of armour*<sup>c</sup>. Devesting ourselves of any evil habits we have contracted; we should be careful to get our minds equipped with those principles of *truth* and *virtue*, which will arm the soul against the powers and works of darkness. This matter is otherwise expressed, “ by putting off, concerning the former *conversation*, the old man<sup>d</sup>, which is corrupt, according to the deceitful lusts; by being renewed in the spirit of our mind, and putting on the new man; which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.” A Christian ought to be possessed with such a vigorous principle of piety and virtue, as will be ready to exert itself, suitably, upon all emergencies; ready to repel the assaults of temptation to sin, on the one hand, and to bear up under any difficulties or discouragements in the way of duty on the other hand. This is what the *apostle* hath beautifully expressed, by the *armour of righteousness, on the right hand*,

<sup>c</sup> Πρῶτον τοίνυν ἀποδύσωμεν, ἀνάγκη γὰρ τὸς μέλλοντας ὄπλιζεσσι, γυμνεσθαι προτέρον. *Lucian de Parafaito.* Op. vol. 2. p. 366. edit. *Salmur.*

<sup>d</sup> That is, the old habit of sin and wickedness; παλαιὸν δὲ ἐπὸς γένεσι φυσὶν ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸν βίον. *Clem. Alexand. Strom.* lib. 3.

<sup>e</sup> Ephes. iv. 22—24.

*band, and on the left<sup>f</sup>, by way of allusion to those weapons, both offensive and defensive, which were used in war. In a word; You should put on the whole armour of God, as the apostle directs, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood<sup>g</sup>, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high-places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness, and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace. Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench the fiery darts of the wicked<sup>h</sup>. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the spirit, which is the word of God. Praying always with all*

*prayer*

<sup>f</sup> 2 Cor. vi. 7.

<sup>g</sup> That is not against men, but devils—συμβαλόντες ἀλλὰ ἀνθρώποις ἀτίμα καὶ σάρκα ἔχουσι, καὶ τῆς φύσεως ἡμῖν πενοινακίνοσι. Polyæn. Stratag. lib. 3. cap. 11.

<sup>h</sup> The violent temptations of Satan, with which he assails our virtue, compared to a sort of weapons used in old time, before the invention of guns; Πυρφόροις βέλεσι χρωμένα. Dio. Cass. lib. 48. Ἐπέβαλλε τοξεύματα πυρός. Appian de Bell. Civ. lib. 4. καὶ πυρφόροις ὅϊσοις ἐβαλλον. Arrian. de Expedit. Alex. lib. 2. &c.

*prayer and supplication, &c<sup>i</sup>.* For prayer is a considerable aid, in the spiritual warfare, whereby divine succours are fetched in to our assistance: and we should ever look upon God as our best friend and ally. *Heathen* piety hath taught us this excellent lesson <sup>k</sup>.

BUT, having furnished ourselves with proper armour, we must endeavour to make a right use of it, and shew our diligence in the Christian warfare, by a close and vigorous application. All the parts and branches of the christian character must be zealously cultivated and improved; that so we may acquit ourselves well in every point of duty and conduct. This notion of *diligence* is clearly suggested. *And, besides this,* saith the apostle, *giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, &c<sup>l</sup>.* If we would give proper diligence to make our calling and election sure, to our faith in Christ, we must add *virtue*, that is, holy *fortitude*, and courage in the profession and defence of the truth, that we may not betray it, either in our words,

<sup>i</sup> Eph. vi. 11—18.

<sup>k</sup> Οἱ πλεῖστοι τὰς πανοπλίας ἀπέθεντο, παρὰ τοῖς βωμαῖς, προσέχοντες ταῖς εὐχαῖς. Polyæn. Stratag. lib. i. cap. xxiii.

<sup>l</sup> Ver. 5—7.

words, or actions<sup>m</sup>. *And to virtue knowledge*; because courage, without wisdom and conduct, will degenerate into dangerous rashness. *And to knowledge temperance*; that, being sober and vigilant, we may be

<sup>m</sup> Persons may betray the truth both ways: and let it be observed, by the bye, that St. Peter himself failed in this point, upon a certain occasion, for which he was blamed by St. Paul, Gal. ii. 11, 12. It is, therefore, one of the many blunders (which have been sufficiently exposed, particularly by three considerable writers, Dr. Leland, Mr. Chapman, and Mr. Samuel Chandler) of a modern author, who styles himself, for-sooth, the *Moral Philosopher* (I suppose by way of jest) to pretend that St. Peter was in a different way of thinking from St. Paul, with reference to the liberty of the Gentiles: because the contrary is evident from that very passage, upon which he grounds his opinion. It is said of Peter, “that he withdrew (or rather, he drew “in, which avoids the tautology) and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.” So that it was fear and cowardice, not principle, or any difference of sentiment, which led him into that method of acting: and, accordingly, he is charged with *disimulation*, ver. 13. The word which is rendered, in our version, *he withdrew*, is ὑπόσειλας, ver. 12. which properly imports, such a behaviour, whereby a person *disguiseth his sentiments*, in whole, or in part: see *Acts xx. 20; 27.* But the true sense of the word is not so well expressed in our translation, as it may be explained by the following passages: ‘Ουμὴν οἵματι γε δεῖν τὴν ἴδιαν ἀσοάλειαν σκοπεῖνθ’ ὑποσειλασθειν ἀπεὶ ὧν ὑμῖν συμφέρειν ἱγοῦμεν. *Demosth. Olynthiac. I.* ’Εγὼ μέν εὖ ἐτίθλατο τῷ πότε τῷρις χάριν εἰλόμην λέγειν ὅτι εἴναι μὴ καὶ συνοίσειν ἔμιν τετεισμένων ᾧ: νῦν τε ἀγιγνάσκω τῶν ἀπλῶν ἐδὲν ὑποσειλάμενων τεταρρίσιασματ. *Idem. Orat. I. in Philip.* ’Ἐι γε δεῖ μηδὲν ὑποσειλάμενον τὸ αληθὲς διηγήσασθατ. *Lucian. Bis Accusat.*

always upon our guard against the enemy. *And to temperance patience*; so as to endure hardness, like good soldiers, and vigorously sustain all the difficulties and fatigues of the heavenly campaign. *And to patience godliness*; not trusting too much to our own strength and prowess, but setting up our banners *in the name of the Lord*; and relying upon God for direction, aid, and success, in all our endeavours, to advance his honour and interest in the world. *And to godliness brotherly-kindness*; a perfect harmony, love, and friendship among fellow-christians. *And to brotherly-kindness charity*; a frank, open, generous disposition towards all mankind, every way becoming the Christian hero<sup>e</sup>n.

WE have now finished the first part of our design; and considered, in its different branches, the important duty of giving diligence to make our calling and election sure.

*Secondly.* The other thing proposed to consideration, may be dispatched in fewer words; viz. the argument, or motive, which is here made use of, to enforce the said duty: *For if you do these things ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly, &c.* In which words two things are included: (1.) an assurance of victory. (2.) The promise of a most glorious reward.

I. AN

<sup>a</sup> Ver. 5, 6, 7 of this chapter.

1. AN assurance of victory : *For if ye do these things, ye shall never fall* : that is, “ ye shall never fall in the field of battle, “ but gain a complete victory over all “ your spiritual enemies.” This is the proper meaning of the term ; which confirms the notion that hath been advanced, and gives it farther evidence ; namely, that the language of the apostle, here, is figurative, and alludes to *military affairs* °. Therefore, an assurance of victory and success, in the grand expedition for heaven, is included in these words ; *For if ye do these things you shall never fall* ; q. d. If you do but use proper *diligence* and application in the Christian warfare, you shall come off with honour and applause, you may reckon on the day your own, and promise yourselves an entire victory over your spiritual enemies ; nothing shall be able to stop your progress, or to hinder your advances

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° For this use of the word *τῆλιον*, let the following passages be considered. Σπαρτιάται μὲν γε τῆλιστας μάχην τῇ περὶ λεύκησα. Dionys. Halicarn. Antiq. lib. 2. Αἰχνυμένους ἐφ' οἷς ἐπίτιλισαν. Plutarch. in Vit. Agesil. Καὶ διεπολέμει πρὸς ἐκείνους, τοτὲ μὲν κατορθῶν, τοτὲ δὲ τῆλισμαν. Strab. Geog. lib. 14. Τρίτον ἥδη τῆλισόντες περὶ πάσον. Appian. de bell. Annib. Καὶ μεγάλως ἐπίτιλισαν ὡς μηκέτ' ἀντιπολεμῆσαν. Dio. Cass. lib. 40. So the verbal noun *τῆλισμα*, signifies a *defeat in battle*. Καὶ μαθὼν καὶ τὰν ἄλλων τῆλισματα, ἔρυγε. Dio. Cass. lib. 38. Μετὰ τὸ τῆλισμα τὸ ἐν χαρακνέα. Pausan. Beotic. Καὶ τὸ ἐν Ἀιγαῖς ποταμοῖς ἀνθίσ Αθηναῖων τῆλισμα. Arrian. Exped. Alexand. lib. 1.

towards the glorious kingdom, for which you are contending. *For, as it follows, so an entrance shall be ministred unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* All opposition shall give way to your prevailing endeavours. The world, the flesh, and the devil, will fly before you, like a routed army, and leave you a free, open passage for your marching to heaven, in *triumphal pomp* and procession. Therefore,

2. WE have here also the promise of a most glorious reward, *namely, a kingdom, an everlasting kingdom, the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;* who, as our common head, leader, and fore-runner, hath already taken possession of this kingdom, and effectually secured it to all his faithful followers. If then, we consider the glorious excellency and magnificence of the reward, its perpetuity and endless duration, together with its absolute certainty, all which particulars are plainly suggested;—is not this a mighty motive, and a most powerful argument, to persuade us all to give the utmost diligence to confirm our calling and election, by a suitable conduct, and a worthy behaviour? What incredible pains will men take! what hazards will they run! what difficulties and dangers will they not encounter, for the sake

sake of an earthly crown, which commonly fits loose, as well as uneasy, upon the head that wears it ! And should a *Christian* think any thing too much, either to do or to suffer, in order to obtain *a crown of glory, which fadeth not away ? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ! Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ! Nay, (but) in all these things we are conquerors, and more than conquerors through him that loved us*<sup>p.</sup>. The great love of Christ, who was made perfect through sufferings, that he might bring many sons to glory, may well inspire us with the most grateful respects, with the most steady regards and inviolable attachment to him, at all times. And, since he hath prepared for us an *everlasting kingdom*, and also furnished us with the most proper means of obtaining it ;—for God *bath given us all things which pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who bath called us to glory and virtue*<sup>q</sup> ;—the faithful followers of Christ, will not only be conquerors, but rich and eternal gainers. Many have hazarded their lives for the honour and advantage of others, who reaped all the benefit of their toil, sweat, and blood. But the *victorious Christian*

<sup>p</sup> Rom. viii. 35, 36.

<sup>q</sup> Ver. 3.

*rian conquers for himself : the kingdom, he contends for, will be his own inheritance. Win the heavenly crown and wear it. The shining squadrons of light, who have fought manfully, under the banner of Christ, against his and their enemies, shall reign with him for ever and ever<sup>r</sup>, in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to bear, let him bear<sup>f</sup>.*

### The C O N C L U S I O N.

FROM what hath been discoursed, the following *inferences* and reflections may be deduced.

1. *THE kingdom of God meets with great opposition in the world.* This opposition was early formed, and has been maintained with various success, from age to age. A most strange, unaccountable *phænomenon!* if one did not consider the nature of God's moral government, that it is not supported by mere power; otherwise it were utterly impossible, for any number of creatures whatsoever, to form a party against the Almighty; because nothing can be a match for *Omnipotence*. But the divine Being exerts only so much power as his wisdom sees

<sup>r</sup> Rev. xxii. 5.

<sup>f</sup> Matth. xiii. 43.

sees fit in the government of *moral* agents, without destroying their proper agency. By this means it cometh to pass, that many, abusing their natural liberty, and misapplying the powers God hath given them, join in a wilful opposition to his kingdom, and so make themselves accountable for the guilty part they act in this affair. Therefore, in a just estimation of things, the being of sin in the world, is so far from any reasonable objection against the providence of God, that it is rather a vindication of it; because it illustrates the wisdom of the divine administration.

2. "Most wise and merciful is the de-  
sign of the *Christian revelation*; since it is  
intended to reclaim sinners from their  
apostasy, and to engage them in the  
cause of truth, and virtue, and real re-  
ligion." To this blessed end and purpose  
the gospel of Christ is so admirably well  
adapted; such an excellent mean it is to  
support the moral government of God  
among men, that, with great elegance  
and propriety, this dispensation is called the  
*kingdom of God*. What reason have we  
to be thankful for it! *The God of all  
grace* (and an adorable instance it is of his  
grace and goodness) *bath called us to his  
eternal glory by Christ Jesus*. "May  
the

" the adversaries of the Christian revelation, and all that oppose themselves, be convinced of their error ; if God, peradventure, will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth ; and that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will ".

3. " THE Christian warfare is to be maintained, and carried on, not by carnal, but spiritual methods ; because it is a spiritual warfare." So that, whatever officers

<sup>a</sup> 2 Tim. ii. 25, 26. There hath been, of late, a dispute about the meaning of this text. It is not likely that ἀντοῦ and ἐκείνου relate to the same person, or antecedent : see Dr. Whitby in loc. The former, I suppose, belongs to the nearer, the latter to the remoter. Therefore, εἰς τὸ ἐκένου θέλημα, must be referred, I imagine, not to ἐζωγρυπνέοντα, but ἀνανθωσιν, and signifies the terminus ad quem, as ἐκ τῆς τῷ διαβόλῳ παγίδῃ, is the terminus a quo. That participle, I suppose, points at διαβόλῳ παγίδῃ, and signifies the devil's captures. The literal sense of the word, is to take alive. Τές πλείστες ἀντῶν διέφειραν, πολλὲς δὲ ζωγρίσαντες ἔδνοσαν. Polyæn. Stratag. lib. 1. cap. viii. comp. lib. 2. cap. xxvii. & alibi passim. The same thing is thus expressed ; πολλὲς μὲν ἀγεῖλον, πολλὲς δὲ ζῶντας ἔιλον. Idem lib. 7. cap. 43. comp. lib. 8. cap. x. But that it signifies to take, with a design to keep alive, doth not appear from the notation of the word, but must be determined by the manner of discourse, and the circumstances of things. That it was an ancient custom, in some places however, to preserve alive captives taken in war, may be inferred from the following passage.

officers Christ hath appointed in his church, he hath invested them only with spiritual powers. “ It was foretold of Christ, *Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power*”; because they were to be invited, and drawn, into his service, by powerful means of persuasion, not driven or forced, by compulsive methods. If the *apostles* of Christ claimed the honourable character of his *embassadors*, it was only to assert the authority he had given them, to *pray* sinners, in his name, to be *reconciled unto God*<sup>x</sup>, *The kingdom of God cometh not with obser-*

Oὐκ ἔσ' ἀνυσδύ τὸν δέ σοι κατακλαῖν.

Ἄλλως ἀρ' αὐτὸν αἰχμάλωτον εἴλομεν;

Ἐπογει δὲ δὴ τὸν δέ μη θαρεῖν νόμος;

Τοῖς τὸν δέ χώρας προσάτασιν & δονέι

Τί δὲ τὸδέ ἐχθρὸς τοῖσι δέ καλὸν θαρεῖν;

N.B. Οὐκ ὅν τὸν δέ γε ζῶνθ' ἐλεωτὸν μάχην.

Euripid. Heraclidae.

But, when animals were taken alive, in hunting, fowling, &c. it was generally with a design to kill them: and the mention of a *snare*, seems to point at some such sense of the word in this passage, comp. Ps. xci. 3. In this view, there is a peculiar propriety in the term *ἀνανθωτοί*; which signifies *to grow sober again, after a fit of drunkenness*: and this may allude to the art of fowling; Πᾶν δὲ ὄγεον ἐυχερᾶς ἀγρεύεις, εἰν διον ἐν ἀγρέοις μεθ' ὄδοις περιπλέοντος οὐρανοῦ ἀπόθατο; Geoponic. seu de Re Rustic. lib. xiv. cap. 21. Edit. Cantab. per Needham.

\* Psal. cx. 3.

\* 2 Cor. v. 20. Reconciliation of parties at variance, is one great end of *solemn embassies*; which

*observation (with external pomp and shew, like the splendid kingdoms of this world) neither shall they say, lo here ! or lo there ! for behold ! the kingdom of God is within you<sup>y</sup>. It is a spiritual, moral kingdom, an empire over minds, a dominion and sovereignty over mens hearts ; a kingdom of truth and virtue, of righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost<sup>z</sup>.* Therefore, the true interests of this divine kingdom, can be promoted by spiritual ways and means alone. *Though we walk in the flesh, saith the apostle, we do not war after the flesh.* For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal (such as derive their efficacy from an arm of flesh) but mighty through God, (divinely mighty, and spiritually powerful, in their nature, tendency, manner of operation and effects) to the pulling down of strong holds : casting down imaginations, and every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God ; and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ<sup>a</sup>.

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may abate the prejudices of some men against the title of *embassadors*, as applied to the apostles of our Lord. It is manifestly taken in this sense, here, by St. Paul. Ἐν δὲ πρεσβέτεια ἀραι ὁ φίλος ἀντὶ πολεμίων παρασκευάζη; Xenoph. Memorab. lib. iv. cap. 6. sec. 14. Πρεσβύτερος ἐνθάδ' ἥκομεν — περὶ πολέμων καταλλαγῆς; Aristoph. Aves.

<sup>y</sup> Luke xvii. 20, 21.

<sup>z</sup> Rom. xiv. 17.

<sup>a</sup> 2 Cor. x. 3—5.

To captivate the souls of men, not to enslave their bodies ; to triumph over their ignorance and errors, their follies and vices, by the *armour of light*, by the force of truth, by the sovereign dint of *reason* and *religion*, is the proper design of the *gospel*, and a *gospel-ministry*.

4. " THE most dutiful and loyal regards are to be paid to Jesus Christ, as being our *Lord*, as well as our Saviour."

The Lord Jesus Christ is the captain of our salvation, and, as it were, commander in chief in the spiritual warfare, by the commission and appointment of God the Father. His *written orders* we have in the *holy scripture*, which we are, indispensably, obliged to obey ; *observing all things whatsoever he bath commanded* ; because, *all power in heaven and earth is given to him*<sup>b</sup>. *The Father judgeth no man, but bath committed all judgment to the Son*, that all men might honour the Son as they honour the Father<sup>c</sup> ; by yielding the same dutiful homage and loyal obedience to his divine authority and commands : so that, from his sentence, there lies no appeal<sup>d</sup>. Therefore, while

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<sup>b</sup> *Matth. xxviii. 18 ; 20.*

<sup>c</sup> *John v. 22, 23.*

<sup>d</sup> *Militiae ab eo, qui imperabit, provocatio ne esto ; quodq; is, qui bellum gerat, imperasset, jus ratumq; esto.*  
*Cicero de legib. lib. 3.*

we justly disclaim all human authorities, in matters of religion and conscience ; and, in this respect, call no man *master upon earth* :—let us remember, that we have a *master in heaven, even Christ*<sup>c</sup>, and so *conform* ourselves to his mind and will, both in judgment and practice.

5. “ *Lastly* ; to miscarry in the affair of “ *religion*, must be highly inexcusable in “ *any Christian* :” because we are positively assured, that we shall succeed in this affair, if we do but use proper *diligence* and application :—consequently, a miscarriage here, must be owing to the want of *diligence*, on our part. What remains, then, but that *we sit down and count the cost*? Let us consider, seriously, what we have to do; shake off carnal sloth and security, and apply ourselves, with fear and trembling, to the great work of our salvation. A great work to be sure it is, which you have undertaken, who are engaged in the spiritual warfare; and stand *marshaled*, as it were, *in battle array for eternal life*. Great opposition you may expect in the glorious enterprise. Many, alas! but too many, have miscarried in the attempt; and *the shield of the mighty hath been vilely cast away*. All this should but animate your courage, awaken your caution, and invigorate your resolution. God hath given a

<sup>c</sup> Matth. xxiii. 8.

*banner*

banner to them that fear him, that it may be displayed because of the truth <sup>f</sup>. The Spirit of the Lord will lift up a standard against his enemies <sup>g</sup>. Deserters there are, and will be, from the Christian standard, and from a scriptural religion; such offences will come: but let not this discourage and cast us down. If the prince of darkness hath erected a great many trophies: greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world <sup>h</sup>. And, we are assured of success, victory, everlasting triumph, and glory, by him, who can give it, and will give it also to faithful, persevering endeavours.— Therefore, gird up the loins of your mind; march on, brave Christians, with undaunted courage; advance boldly in the cause of truth and virtue; take the kingdom of heaven with a noble violence. *O glorious contest! O most glorious victory!* Therefore, watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong <sup>i</sup>. “Now unto him “that is able to keep you from falling, and “to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; “to the only wise God, our Saviour, be “glory, and majesty, dominion and power, “both now and ever. Amen.

<sup>f</sup> Psal. lxxx. 4.

<sup>g</sup> Isa. lix. 19.

<sup>h</sup> 1 John iv. 4.

<sup>i</sup> 1 Cor. xvi. 13.



# APPENDIX

To the DISCOURSE

Upon ii PETER i. 10, 11.

SINCE the love of Christ, in dying for us, lays us under peculiar obligations to love one another; the stated remembrance of his death is a proper mean both of testifying and improving mutual love and affection among *christian brethren*. 'Tis true, our charity should be unconfined: but, if we are obliged to honour *all men*, we ought, in a more especial manner, to love the *brotherhood*<sup>a</sup>. And, it may deserve consideration, whether the celebration of the *Lord's-supper* ought not to be peculiarly appropriated to the *Christian brotherhood*, as a *family of love*. It appears, however, to have been so understood in the primitive times. The *Gentiles* themselves, it's ob-

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<sup>a</sup> i Pet. ii. 17.

servable, had their *charistia*, or *love-feast*; —to which none but *relations* were admitted; and the design whereof, was to cultivate *family friendships*<sup>b</sup>. In like manner, the primitive *Christians* had their *love-feasts*, which they observed as a *spiritual brotherhood*<sup>c</sup>. And though the said feasts were different, I suppose, from the *Lord's-supper*; this ordinance might, very naturally, be considered as the most sacred pledge and symbol of *Christian* love and charity. The method, in which the *Greeks* had been used to manage their *friendly collations*, might, possibly, give occasion to those disorders in the church of *Corinth*, which are sharply reprobated by St. *Paul*, *i Cor.* xi. where he discourses so largely, at the same time, concerning the due celebration of the *Lord's-supper*; which appears to have been annexed to the said entertainments, till St. *Paul* regulated the matter; after which regulation, a contrary custom took place<sup>d</sup>. This, I apprehend, is a more probable account of the matter, than the supposition of some learned men; *viz.* that the entertainments aforesaid had a reference to the *Jewish passover*<sup>e</sup>. I am

<sup>b</sup> Vid. *Ovid. Fasti*, lib. ii. *Valer. Max.* lib. ii. cap. i. sec. 18.

<sup>c</sup> *Agapen fratrum. Tertullian. ad Martyr.*

<sup>d</sup> Vid. *Plin. Ep.* lib. x. 97.

<sup>e</sup> See Dr. *Lightfoot Op.* vol. ii. p. 776.

am the rather inclined to this notion, because something of the like irregularities were censured by *Socrates*, in his time, with respect to those *collations*<sup>f</sup>. In short, what I would humbly propose to consideration, is this ; “ Whether the *Lord’s supper*, as being a peculiar symbol of *Christian communion*, ought not to be solemnized by *Christians*, as a distinct, spiritual society, and considered, under the notion of a *religious fraternity*.” Since it is a *positive ordinance* of *Christ*, it must be appropriated to the *special end*, and use, for which it was, by him, designed. And it cannot, I think, in reason be supposed to stand wholly upon the same foot with the *moral parts* of divine worship, which are duties of *natural religion*, and *common* therefore to *Christians* and other men alike. If *St. Paul* enjoined the *Corinthians*<sup>g</sup> not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one, no not to eat; —but required them to put away from among them any such wicked person<sup>h</sup>; —Can it be reasonably imagined, that they were to receive, or admit, him into the *holy brotherhood*,

<sup>f</sup> *Xenoph. Memorab.* lib. iii. cap. 14.

<sup>g</sup> 1 Ep. v. 11.

<sup>h</sup> Ver. 13.

therhood, by imparting to him the most sacred symbols, the most solemn tokens and pledges of *Christian* friendship and fellowship? Were they forbid to eat bread with him, at a common table? and could they be allowed to communicate with him, at the *table of the Lord*? Incredible! The testimony of *Justin. M.* is clear and express to the contrary. " It is not lawful, saith  
 " he, for any other to partake of the *Eucharist*, but one that believes the *Christian*  
 " doctrine, and is *baptized*, and lives ac-  
 " cording to *Christ's commands*<sup>i</sup>." And may not St. *Jude* be understood to complain of it, as an irregularity, which wanted reforming,—when he saith, of some disorderly persons, *These are spots in your feasts of charity*<sup>k</sup>? It hath been pretended, indeed, that the chief reason of St. *Paul's* directing immoral Christians to be laid under a censure, was, to prevent infection by their example: and so, because *infection* is promoted by private converse, not by public communion;—from hence it is inferred, that such censures have only a regard to the former. But—the same reason would have obliged, as strongly, to shun the society of *unbelievers*, equally immoral, as their example must be equally infecting: whereas,

<sup>i</sup> *Apol.* 2.<sup>k</sup> *Jude* ver. 12.

the *apostles* make a plain distinction, in the measures of conduct, to be observed towards *them*, and towards *professed Christians*<sup>1</sup>. Besides the danger of infection, there is the shaming of the offender<sup>m</sup> to be considered, in this matter: and, above all, the rescuing *religion* from the publick scandal and reproach, which is cast upon it, by loose, immoral professors of Christianity. But, if this be a good reason for avoiding the private society of scandalous *Christians*; how much more to exclude them from *publick communion*; because every *religion* is judged of, by its most *sacred and solemn acts*: And therefore, must, unavoidably, suffer in its reputation, if those persons, who are *judged unworthy* of private converse, be admitted to its *holy mysteries*: *Procul este profani.* Why, *Heathens* themselves guarded their *communions*: and what would the world have thought of the *Christian church*, had she received, into her bosom, the most profligate creatures unreformed? — Upon the whole, the solemn renewing our *Christian vows*, or rather, recognizing our *Christian obligations*, at the *Lords-table*, may be considered as a proper mean of *making our calling and election*, into the visible church of Christ, *firm and*

<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. v. 10, 11.

<sup>m</sup> 2 Thes. iii. 14, 15.

and sure ;—particularly in regard of the relation it hath to visible *church-membership*, upon the foot of a regular discipline, and gospel order. And, though some persons make little account of gospel order and discipline, or even a *gospel ministry* ;—those, who believe the divine authority of the *gospel*, and consider the *church of Christ*, as a *spiritual society*, formed upon that authority, and settled by him, under proper regulations ;—cannot slight these things, without great inconsistency, and symbolizing with the enemies of the Christian revelation, conspiring with them to reduce all things to a *state of nature*, or of mere *natural religion*<sup>n</sup>. In the mean time, the want of *Godly discipline* is too visible every where : and the *church of England*, in particular, piously *wisheth for the restoration of it*<sup>o</sup>. May such wishes be attended with successful endeavours to promote so good a design ! But, alas ! what prospect can there be of seeing things placed upon a better footing ;—so long as the *sacrament of the Lord's-supper* is made a *test* of any thing but *Christian sobriety and virtue* !

<sup>n</sup> Vid. *Hughes's Differt. Proæmial. ad Chrysostom. de Sacerd.*

<sup>o</sup> *Preamble to the Commination.*

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